(f) and (g) State-wise details of production of tea during the last three years are as follows :

Production (Qty in mn. kgs.)

Name of the States	1998-99	1997-98	1996-97
Assam	449.02	438.76	419.25
West Bengal	191.20	177.10	160.00
Tamil Nadu	124.31	134.44	118.42
Kerala	69.58	72.37	63.42
Other Stales	16.14	15.35	14.22
ALL INDIA	850.25	838.02	775.31

{Source: Tea Board)

Phasing out DEPB Scheme under WTO Agreement

2451. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTOY be pleased lo state :

(a) whether it is a fact that in view of the forthcoming WTO agreements, the DEPB scheme may have to be phased out; and

(b) what alternative plans Government have made to protect exports'

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRl MURASOLl MARAN): (a) with a view to achieving simplification of duty neutralization mechanisms and procedures, it has been decided lo phase out the DEPB scheme with effect from 31-03-2002

(b) From 1st April, 2002 onwards, exporters shall be reimbursed the indirect taxes and duties, paid on inputs, at the time of shipment itself, through one Duty Drawback Scheme.

News items captioned "Seagrams cashes in policy confusion buys distillery"

2452. SHRIDILIP SINGH JUDEV Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the nc«s-itcm captioned "Seagrams cashes in policy confusion buys distillery " appearing in the Observer ofBusiness and Polities. New Delhi, dated 25* December. 1999;

(b) whether it is a fact that N4/s Seagrams Mfg FM Limited bought out Oceanic Distilleries Pvt. Ltd without the approval of the Cenlral Government and signed the MoU with OPDL in August, 1996; and

(c) If so, what action Government propose to take in the matter ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (DR. RAMAN): (a) to (c) The facts mentioned in the News Item have come to the notice of Gm'emment. It is for the concerned and relevant authorities to ascertain the facts for appropriate action.

News-items captioned "India is 3rd on EU's trade priority"

2453. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD ; Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state :

(a) Whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news-item published in the Times of India, dated the 2nd March, 2000 captioned "India is -Ird on EU's trade priority";

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is Government's reaction thereto ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLIMARAN); (a) Yes. Sir

(b) and (c) Mr. Pascal Lamy, Trade Commissioner of the European Commission visited India during 2-8. 2000 During his meeting with ihc Minister of Commerce & Industry on 7th March. 2000, the two sides exchanged views on bilateral and multilateral matters such as market access for Indian products in the EU market. anti-dumping':inti-subsidv mciisurcs instituted by EC and multilateral trade issues

Performance of Export Processing Zones

2454. SHRI ANANTA SETHI ; (a) whether Government have received the performance of the Export Processing Zone.

(b) if so, the details thereof during the last three years ;

(c) whether Government propose to open new EPZ during 2000-2001;

(d) if so, the places identified for the location of new EPZ ; and

(e) the details thereof ?